

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF PETER DOUGLAS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 26, 2011

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the long and distinguished public service career of my dear friend Peter Douglas. Peter is retiring after nearly 26 years as the California Coastal Commission's Executive Director, a post that he has held continuously since 1985, longer than any other director of a California State agency. In that time he has done more than any other individual to shape the California Coastal Commission and by extension the California coast we know today. So I think it appropriate that we honor his vision, dedication, and tenacity in doing as much as humanly possible to keep the California coast natural, open, and accessible.

Peter has always had a knack for pulling success from challenging circumstances. Peter's Jewish mother gave birth to him while living in Berlin, Germany, in 1942. His family managed to escape to Mexico and then, in the early 1950s, to the United States. Peter went on to graduate from UCLA in 1965 and later from the UCLA law school in 1969. After a brief law practice, Peter went to work for Assemblyman Alan Sieroty, a Democrat from Beverly Hills. And that is when I first met him and where he really started his work as a troublemaker and paradigm shifter par excellence.

In the late 1950s, my father, the late State Senator Fred Farr, authored an early version of a California Coastal Act, but the politics were not yet there to support its passage. Peter helped change that by drafting an updated version of my father's legislation that this time went to the voters as Proposition 20. As part of the grass roots campaign to pass Prop 20, Peter, with a little help from me and some others, organized a coastal bike ride along the coast from far north to the Mexican border. With Prop 20's passage the California Coastal Commission was born. Peter then went to work for the Assembly Natural Resources Committee and the Select Committee on Coastal Protection, from where he helped draft the 1976 California Coastal Act, which made the Coastal Commission permanent and set in motion the creation of local coastal plans and the other basic elements of California's coastal protection framework.

Peter then went to work for the Commission as its Chief Deputy, a position he held until his 1985 appointment as the Commission's executive director. As Executive Director, Peter led the Commission's development into the bulwark of California coastal protection that it is today. He has described the measure of his success as the things that we don't see: the wetlands left unfilled; the scenic vistas left open; the coastal habitat still available for wildlife; and even the coastal amenities now open to minorities. Others have measured his success with a catalogue of awards and recognition too long to detail here. Of course this has

not come without controversy. He has frequently tangled with the rich and powerful over various coastal development proposals and has survived over a dozen attempts to remove him.

Unfortunately, illness has done what lobbyists could not. His long running struggle with cancer has forced Peter to step down from his executive director position. I know I speak for many of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, in thanking Peter for his selfless service and in wishing him and his family and friends all the best.

TRIBUTE TO 70TH MCAFEE FAMILY
REUNION IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 26, 2011

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the McAfee family for celebrating their 70th family reunion in San Antonio, Texas.

On Saturday, August 27, 2011, members of the McAfee family will gather at Rodriguez City Park in San Antonio to celebrate a tradition of coming together that has lasted 70 years. The McAfee Family Reunion began in 1941 with the family of William and Charlotte Newton McAfee, and their nine children. This year, four of the McAfee children from the initial reunion will be celebrating their 70th continuous McAfee Family Reunion: Harold McAfee, Delton McAfee King, Doris McAfee Walker, and Joseph McAfee.

At the core of American values is a commitment to family, and I want to thank all of the members of the McAfee family for their incredible dedication to each other. They are truly a model for families all across our great country, and I am honored to have their family celebrate such a tremendous milestone in my district. The McAfee family's steadfast embodiment of family values is an inspiration, and I wish them years of continued happiness for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S EQUALITY
DAY BY PROTECTING WOMEN'S
HEALTH

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 26, 2011

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize August 26 as Women's Equality Day, which marks the date in 1920 that women earned the right to vote. Today, we celebrate women's equality in the United States after so many years of being treated as second-class citizens, denied the full rights and privileges of male citizens.

Mr. Speaker, voting rights are now an institutionalized right for all women. Any attempt to

weaken or withdraw them would be met with universal public condemnation. Unfortunately, there are other historic advances for women which face an uncertain future. One of these is Medicare, which 1 in 5 women rely on for basic health insurance protection.

Since its enactment, Medicare has been a great equalizer for women's rights. By removing some of the burdens associated with being primary caregivers, Medicare freed women to pursue roles outside the home.

Unfortunately, even in retirement, women are more likely to be dependent on Medicare than men. It is a critical source of health insurance coverage for nearly all older women in the United States and for many younger women who have permanent disabilities. Nearly half, 49 percent, of women on Medicare have three or more chronic health conditions and 57 percent of women on the program live below the federal poverty level.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare is a social insurance program that provides health insurance coverage to all people who are aged 65 and over as well as those who are permanently disabled.

Like women's suffrage, Medicare endured a long and difficult battle to be signed into law since it was first called for by President Truman in 1946. It was introduced in Congress every session from 1952 to 1964 and was defeated each time. Finally passed as part of the Great Society initiative under President Lyndon B. Johnson, Medicare was signed into law in Independence, Missouri on July 30, 1965.

Johnson chose Independence as a tribute to President Harry Truman's efforts to pass Medicare decades before and enrolled the former President as the first Medicare beneficiary. Medicare has four different parts: Hospital Coverage, Medical Insurance, Medicare Advantage Plans, and Prescription Drug Plans which help to cover the cost of inpatient care in hospitals, doctor's visits, hospital outpatient care, preventative services, and the cost of prescription drugs.

Since the beginning of the program, Medicare has had a profound impact on the health and well-being of older women. In 1964, only 51 percent of Americans 65 and older had health care coverage, nearly 30 percent of seniors lived below the poverty line and the average life expectancy of Americans was 70.2 years old.

Today, virtually all Americans 65 and older have health care coverage, only 8.9 percent of seniors live below the poverty line and the average life expectancy of Americans has increased to 78.2 years old. Additionally, Medicare provides affordable health care coverage to over 47 million Americans, including 39 million seniors and 8 million Americans under 65 with disabilities. Among the oldest Medicare beneficiaries, those 85 years and older—70 percent are women.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare is popular and strongly supported by the majority of American women, with 72 percent regarding Medicare as extremely important to their retirement security.

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